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## THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

## ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Letter dated 8 January 1998 from the Permanent Representative of  
Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On 11 March 1997, Nabil Ramlawi, the PLO representative to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, charged that the Israeli Government had infected 300 Palestinian children with the HIV virus. To this day, no action has been taken by the United Nations to challenge this modern version of anti-Semitic blood libels that were once rampant in medieval Europe.

Since that time there has been increasing evidence of anti-Semitism emerging as an integral part of the rhetoric of Palestinian Authority officials, and they encourage its use in the Palestinian media. It should be emphasized that this vile propaganda is spread through mainstream Palestinian newspapers, public radio and public television, which operate under the license of the Palestinian Authority and with its backing.

Moreover, newspapers like Al-Hayat Al-Jadida or Al-Ayyam have their main editorial offices in areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority. They only began operations after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, under the Oslo Accords, in 1994. These major Palestinian media are, furthermore, managed by individuals who have had leading positions in the PLO or the Fatah organization, such as Nabil Amru, Akram Haniyyah or Radwan Abu-Ayyash. For example, Nabil Amru, the publisher of Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, previously served as the PLO representative in Moscow and as media adviser to Chairman Yasser Arafat; today, Mr. Amru is also a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council. Six recurrent themes are discernible in the examples that follow:

1. Classic anti-Semitic stereotypes

"We are fighting and struggling with an enemy who is Shylock. We must know that he is Shylock." (Othman Abu Gharbiya, Palestinian Authority



Chairman Yasser Arafat's Adviser on National Political Guidance, in an interview with the official Palestinian Authority radio station, The Voice of Palestine, 15 March 1997)

"The [Palestinian] Authority cannot do a thing, except protect its people and itself from an enemy which bares its Jewish fangs from the four corners of the earth ..." (From an article in the official Palestinian Authority newspaper, Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, 6 August 1997)

## 2. Comparisons of Israel with Nazis

"Since its establishment, the racist Zionist entity has been implementing various forms of terrorism on a daily basis which are a repetition of the Nazi terror - there is no difference between Hitler and Ben-Gurion, and if there was a difference at all, it was one of quantity and not one of substance." (From an article in Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, 3 September 1997)

"Israeli practices in many aspects are equal with, if not more brutal than, those practiced by occupying Nazi soldiers dealing with French-Dutch citizens during the Second World War." (Palestinian Authority Information Ministry press release, 10 December 1997)

## 3. Denial of the Holocaust

"It is well-known that every year the Jews exaggerate what the Nazis did to them. They claim there were 6 million killed, but precise scientific research demonstrates that there were no more than 400,000 .... They have profited materially, spiritually, politically and economically from the talk about the Nazi killings. This investment is favorable to them and they view it as a profitable activity so they inflate the number of victims all the time." (From a cultural affairs programme broadcast on the official Palestinian Authority television station, 25 August 1997)

"Imagine ... the Jews are saying: 'The Nazis burned us in gas chambers.' That is a false tale, but at times I felt that we were those who were being burned up within the walls ..." (Abir Al-Wahidi, female Fatah terrorist released in February 1997, in an interview with the official Palestinian Authority television station, 13 February 1997)

## 4. Libellous accusations

"Abd Al-Fatah Hamid, the Head of the Control and Inspection Department in the PA Ministry of Supplies, said that a committee will work ... against spoiled goods and food supplies, which are one of Israel's means in its war against Palestinian society." (From an article in the Palestinian daily Al-Ayyam, 29 October 1997)

"They brought Russian Jewish girls with AIDS to spread the disease among Palestinian youth." (Abdel-Razek Al-Majida, Commander of the Palestinian General Security Service in Gaza, quoted by Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, 15 May 1997)

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5. Delegitimizing Israel and the Jewish people

"There is no people or land named Israel ... these Zionists are not fit to establish a nation or to have their own language or even their own religion." (Interview with Safi Naz Kassam, Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, 1 September 1997)

"... there is no tangible evidence of any Jewish traces/remains in the old city of Jerusalem and its immediate vicinity." (Palestinian Authority Information Ministry, 10 December 1997)

"The Jewish-Muslim conflict is eternal. It is founded on the Torah, the Talmud, and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. the entire world is tormented by the Jews. The fate of the Palestinian people is to struggle against the Jews on behalf of the world." (A review of research: "The History of the Conflict between Muslims and Jews", by Ahmad Khalil Akil Al-Awadah, Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, 1 September 1997)

"The 'Al-Buraq' Wall [the Western Wall] is a part of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Jews have no relation to it, whether or not a decision to expropriate it was made." (Palestinian Authority Mufti Ikrama Sabri in Al-Ayyam, 22 November 1997)

6. Equating Zionism with racism

"When the UN General Assembly defined Zionism as a form of racism, it expressed this as a fact, a fact which is backed up by Israeli operations which the human conscience cannot bear. Zionism remains ... another face of racism, despite all the pressures the US has put in order to change the UN decision or to cancel it ..." (Palestinian Authority Under-Secretary for Culture Yihya Yakhlaf, Al-Ayyam, 7 August 1997)

"Zionist racism reaches its peak with this Talmudic offensive, which tears the pages of the Koran, and which offends the Master of Prophets, Muhammad, Allah's blessing be with him, and the Blessed Virgin, mother of Christ, may they rest in peace." (Hassan Al-Kashef, Director-General of the Palestinian Authority Information Ministry, quoted in Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, 7 July 1997)

This is only a partial list.

As the previous quotations demonstrate, repeated reference is made to "the Protocols of the Elders of Zion", and Palestinian Authority newspapers publish stories about Jewish "plots" and Jewish "fangs". Jews are often depicted as power-hungry and lusting after money, with occasional references to Shakespeare's Shylock and The Merchant of Venice as examples of Jewish greed. Palestinian officials have continued to accuse Israel of injecting Palestinians with the AIDS virus, conducting medical experiments on Palestinian prisoners and selling spoiled food to Palestinians. the Palestinian media and Palestinian officials have engaged in Holocaust denial and accused Jews of inflating the number of victims in order to profit from it.

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Under the terms of the Oslo Accords and the Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron, the Palestinian Authority is obligated to refrain from incitement against Israel and to take measures to prevent others from engaging in it. The Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Oslo 2) of 28 September 1995 (article XXII) states that Israel and the Palestinian Authority "shall seek to foster mutual understanding and tolerance and shall accordingly abstain from incitement, including hostile propaganda, against each other and, without derogating from the principle of freedom of expression, shall take legal measures to prevent such incitement by any organizations, groups or individuals within their jurisdiction."

Recognizing that the language of incitement was continuing to be used by leading officials in the Palestinian Authority during 1996, the Israeli Government insisted upon a reaffirmation of this commitment when it completed negotiations over Israel's redeployment in Hebron. In the Note for the Record that accompanied the Hebron Protocol of 17 January 1997, the Palestinians reaffirmed their commitment regarding "preventing incitement and hostile propaganda, as specified in article XXII of the Interim Agreement". It was hoped that this renewed commitment would lead to a change in the tone of Palestinian statements during 1997, but these statements only seemed to worsen.

As a democracy, Israel understands the value of freedom of the press as well as freedom of expression. But when an Israeli extremist, from the periphery of Israeli society, put up sacrilegious posters that were deeply offensive to Islam, a Jerusalem district court just recently showed no reluctance to act firmly and convict that individual of violating Israeli law. The Palestinian Authority has demonstrated its willingness to take action against those with whom it disagrees on far less serious matters than racism and incitement, such as Daoud Kuttub of a Palestinian film production company, Othman Halaq of the pro-Jordanian Al-Nahar newspaper and Maher al-Alami, editor of Al-Quds. Palestinian security services acted against each of these individuals. In the case of Palestinian anti-Semitism, the Palestinian Authority's inaction can only be interpreted as a clear expression of approval.

In many cases, there is widespread ignorance about these trends in the Palestinian Authority. In other cases, this development is greeted with apathy. The silence of the international community in the face of this anti-Semitic hate campaign is intolerable. As a nation that has witnessed how incitement and racism can serve as precursors for physical destruction, Israel condemns this renewed anti-Semitism in the strongest of terms and finds it to represent a major impediment to peace and reconciliation, to which Israel remains committed.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 37 and 110.

(Signed) Dore GOLD  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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